Thoresen Mur

Collector Of Guns Was Shot

Fresno Home Death Scene

Special to The Examiner

FRESNO — William E. Thoresen III, the eccentric young millionaire who once stuffed his San Francisco mansion with seven tons of illegal weapons, was shot to death in his home here early today.

His attractive wife, Louise, 32, was held for investigation.

Administrators of St. Agnes Hospital here said the 31 year old heir to a steel fortune was dead on arrival at the hospital from multiple chest wounds.

Police Capt. Alvin Bilbo would say only that officers from his department received a call at 8:24 a.m. to investigate a homicide at the Thoresen home at 1034 East Cambridge Ave. near the Fresno State College campus.

THEIR COLORFUL MARITAL CAREER ENDS WITH MURDER
Heir William Thoresen is dead, his wife Louise is held

dered, Wife Hel

June 10, 1970 Exam

—From Page 1

Pistol Recovered

It was learned, however, that Mrs. Thoresen had gone to the home of a neighbor and said she had just shot her husband.

It also was learned police had recovered a .38 caliber pistol and that the slaying apparently had taken place in an upper floor bedroom of the two story home.

No motive has yet been established for the slaying. Mrs. Thoresen had filed for divorce in Phoenix last October but the couple had been living together in the Fresno home while both pursued appeals from their convictions of illegal possession of firearms.

Appellate Ruling

The fatal shooting occurred only a few hours after Thoresen had learned that the United States Court of Appeals in San Francisco had granted both him and his wife a partial victory in their appeal from a conviction in federal court here last year on charges of illegally shipping firearms in interstate commerce.

The appellate court had ruled that the trial court must re-examine at open hearings two defenses made by the couple before ruling them guilty of illegal gun dealing.

Thoresen had called a friend in San Francisco at 2 a.m. after learning of the partial reversal, and the friend described him as "near hysterical."

The Thoresens were parents of a 7 year old son, Michael, whose custody had been granted to Thoresen in the divorce filings.

The Thoresens were married more than a decade ago in Chicago in what was described as a Cinderella wedding for the pretty, brunette bride.

Steel Fortune Heir

The groom was the heir to a steel fortune accumulated by his father. The bride was a speech therapist who had been reared in one of Chicago's poorest slum neighborhoods.

Brushes with the law and spates of violence became familiar to the Thoresens before and during marriage.

Before marriage, he was put on two years probation for stealing posters from a ferry terminal in Bar Harbor, Maine. His wife was with him at the time.

Knifed in Quarrel

In 1957, Thoresen was stabbed while quarreling with a parking lot attendant in Evanston, Ill., and in 1958, he was fined $50 for shoving a Kenilworth, Ill., resident.

In 1964 he was arrested with a University of Arizona student for a series of bomb explosions near a Tucson radio station but charges were dropped.

In April, 1967, Thoresen and his wife made their biggest news when the seven tons of automatic firearms and ammunition were found in their mansion at 2801 Broadway in San Francisco's Pacific Heights.

Tons of Guns, Ammo

Federal officials recovered, in all, 28 tons of weapons and ammunition stored by the Thoresens in Bay Area warehouses.

At the time, Thoresen described himself as a dedicated gun collector.

Shortly before the raid on the Pacific Heights mansion, Mrs. Thoresen had been arrested for attempting to ship an automatic weapon via an airline.

She still faces trial on that charge.

—Turn to Page 8, Col. 1

Thoresen Murdered, Wife Hel

June 10, 1970 Exam

Collector Of Guns Was Shot

Special to The Examiner

FRESNO — William E. horesen III. the eccen-ic young millionaire ho once stuffed his San rancisco mansion with ven tons of illegal weap-ns. was shot to death in s home here early to-ay.

His willowy wife. Louise ', was held for investiga-on. She was taken to St. gnes Hospital here for what lice termed "treatment of juries."

Attendants at the hospital id the 32 year old heir to a el fortune was dead on ar-al at 8:40 a.m. from multi-e chest wounds.

Police Capt. Alvin Bilbo uld say only that officers m his department re-ved a call at 8:24 a.m. to estigate a homicide at the oresen home at 1034 East mbridge Ave. near the esno State College cam-s.

t was learned, however, t Mrs. Thoresen had gone the home of W. J. McDer-tt. an attorney living directly across the street, and announced:

"Bill has been shot. Call an ambulance."

It also was learned police had recovered a .38 caliber pistol and that the slaying apparently had taken place in an upper floor bedroom of the two story home.

Police indicated the slaying climaxed a family quarrel. They did not specify what triggered the quarrel.

Mrs. Thoresen filed for divorce in Phoenix, last October but the couple had been living together in the Fresno home while both pursued appeals from their convictions for illegal possession of firearms.

The fatal shooting occurred only a few hours after Thoresen had learned that the United States Court of Appeals in San Francisco had granted both him and his wife a partial victory in their appeal

—Turn to Page 8, Col. 1

STORMY CAREER ENDED IN MURDER
William Thoresen is dead, wife held

—From Page 1

from a conviction in federal court here last year on charges of illegally shipping firearms in interstate commerce.

The appellate court had ruled that the trial court must re-examine at open hearings two defenses made by the couple before ruling them guilty of illegal gun dealing.

Thoresen had called a friend in San Francisco at 2 a.m. after learning of the partial reversal, and the friend described him as "near hysterical."

The Thoresens were parents of a 7 year old son, Michael, whose custody had been granted to Thoresen in the divorce filings.

The child had departed for school at the time of the slaying and was later taken by the McDermotts to their home.

His father is the son of William Thoresen II. president of Great Western Steel Co. in Chicago. The senior Thoresen and his wife were reported enroute to Fresno to care for the grandson.

The slain man was reputed to have inherited approximately $70 million from his grandfather and a brother, Richard, 24, who was found shot to death under mysterious circumstances in a rented car in Chicago in 1965.

A coroner's jury was unable to establish a motive for the death but Thoresen always maintained his brother's death was suicide.

The Thoresens were married more than a decade ago in Chicago in what was described as a Cinderella wedding for the pretty, brunette bride.

Steel Fortune Heir

The groom was the heir to a steel fortune accumulated by his father. The bride was a speech therapist who had been reared in one of Chicago's poorest slum neighborhoods.

Brushes with the law and spates of violence became familiar to the Thoresens before and during marriage.

Before marriage, he was put on two years probation for stealing posters from a ferry terminal in Bar Harbor, Maine. His wife was with him at the time.

Knifed in Quarrel

In 1957, Thoresen was stabbed while quarreling with a parking lot attendant in Evanston, Ill., and in 1958, he was fined $50 for shoving a Kenilworth, Ill., resident.

In 1964 he was arrested with a University of Arizona student for a series of bomb explosions near a Tucson radio station but charges were dropped.

In April, 1967, Thoresen and his wife made their biggest news when the seven tons of automatic firearms and ammunition were found in their mansion at 2801 Broadway in San Francisco's Pacific Heights.

Tons of Guns, Ammo

Federal officials recovered, in all, 28 tons of weapons and ammunition stored by the Thoresens in Bay Area warehouses.

At the time, Thoresen described himself as a dedicated gun collector.

Shortly before the raid on the Pacific Heights mansion, Mrs. Thoresen had been arrested for attempting to ship an automatic weapon via an airline.

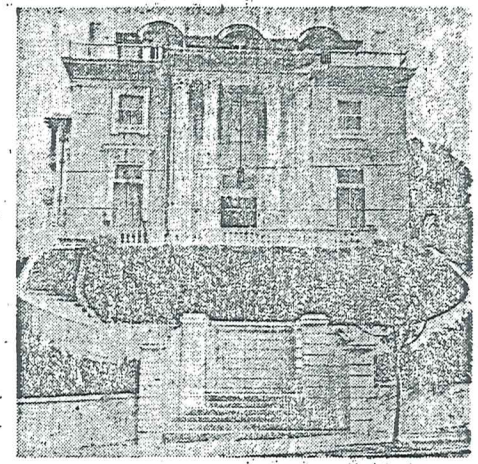
She still faces trial on that charge.

In the first phase of prose-

tion on the gun charges, Thoresen was defended by criminal attorney J. W. "Jake" Ehrlich who described his tall, handsome, often short-tempered client variously as "a gun freak" "a good American citizen" and "a strange man."

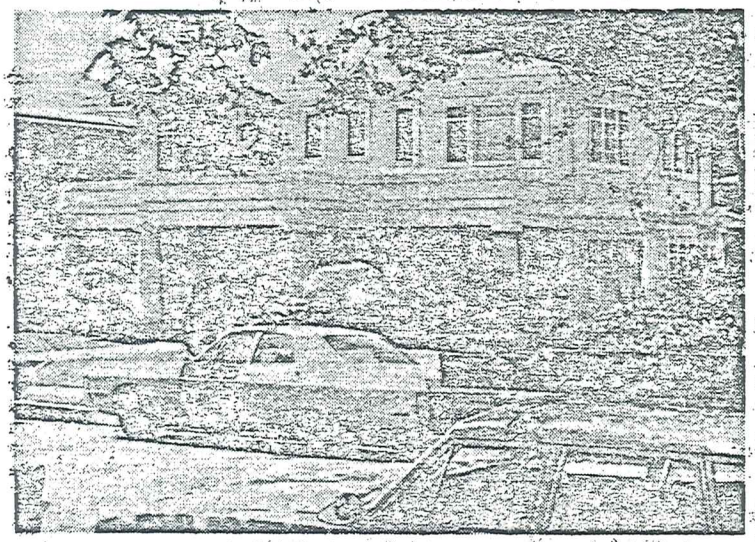
Gun Kills Thoresen; Wife Is Hel

SOME OF AMMUNITION SEIZED IN THORESEN HOME HERE
Seven tons were carted from Broadway house in 1967



THORESEN HOUSE ON PACIFIC HEIGHTS
Shooting occurred, however, at their Fresno hom

Thoresen Is Shot to Death; Wife Held



WHERE WILLIAM THORESEN WAS SHOT TO DEATH TODAY
Residence is in fashionable area near Fresno City College —AP Photo

SOME OF AMMUNITION SEIZED IN THORESEN HOME HERE
Seven tons were carted from Broadway house in 1967